

1792 139 Mr. R. G. H. M. A. N.
CHRISTIANITY
REVIVED,
AND
JUDAISM
SUBVERTED.

^K Occasioned by
^{B T}
Mr. CHUBB's late TRACTS,
CONCERNING
Scripture Inspiration; the Resur-
rection of Christ; and the Case of
Abraham, in being commanded
of God to offer up his Son.

In a **LETTER** from a Gentleman in
the Country to his Friend in *London*.

Wherein the Doctrine of **SACRIFICES** is
examined, and the Cases of *Abraham* and
Jephtha are particularly considered.

Thomas Morgan M.D.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the *Oxford-*
Arms in Warwick-Lane.

M.DCC.XXXIV.

14/5-

CHRISTIANITY

REVISED

AND

JUDAIISM

SUPPLEMENT

Occasioned by

Mr. Chubb's Lectures



Given by the Trustees

of the British Museum

in being commanded

of God to offer up his son.

In a LETTER from a Gentleman in

the County to his Friend in London.

Which the Design of a Sermon is

examined, and the Causes of the

Yerks are particularly considered.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the Old

Church in Warwick-Lane.

MDCCLXXIV.



Christianity Reviv'd,

A N D

Judaism Subverted.

S I R,

HAVING just read over Mr. *Chubb's* four Tracts lately publish'd, I here send you my Opinion of them, in some Observations and Remarks upon them, as you desired. But, as I am engaged in other Business and not much at leisure for such Inquiries, I must leave it, to your calm Judgment, whether my Thoughts about it ought to be laid before the World or not: for tho' I may presume I am able to defend what I have advanced, in case it should be necessary, yet I may not perhaps apprehend my self obliged to answer every

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Writer, who may think himself capable of confuting me. I only mention this, to let you know that, if you print what I here send you, you will be concerned in some measure to answer any thing that may be objected to it as well as my self; and, if I can depend upon such a Second, you may do with these Papers just as you please.

In the first Tract, I think, Mr. *Chubb* has fairly proved that the Apostles and Evangelists, considered as Historians and epistolary Writers, were not *inspired* in our well-known and establish'd Sense of the Word; and consequently that they were not universally, and in every thing, infallible. Mr. *Chubb* indeed does not, here, make the Distinction between Matters of Knowledge or Science, and Matters of Faith, Opinion, or Belief; I say, he does not make this Distinction directly and explicitly, tho' this is what he must have supposed and aim'd at: for, in Matters of Knowledge, or Science, every Man is infallible; but in Matters of Faith, Opinion, or meer Belief, no Man can be so. Nor did the Apostles, or any of those who were at first endued with the Holy Ghost,

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ever claim any such Privilege, or pretend to it; but this was only the insolent and impudent Claim and Pretence of the Church of *Rome*, in After-Ages, as Mr. *Chubb* has justly observ'd.

But tho' I have no Objections to any thing that Mr. *Chubb* has advanc'd in this first Tract, yet with regard to the two next I have several things to offer against him, which are, at least in my opinion, very material.

In his Answer to *Britannicus*, he asserts and maintains, that the Miracles which *Jesus* wrought in his Life-time, especially those of raising the Dead, afforded as full and strong a Proof of his Messiah-ship, as his own Resurrection from the Dead could have done, supposing it ever so clearly prov'd; and that if one of these Proofs be defective the other must be so too. But herein he is certainly mistaken, or, at least, I must beg leave to give some Reasons why I am obliged, in this Case, to stand by *Britannicus* and cannot possibly agree with Mr. *Chubb*.

'Tis well known, that it was an essential Character of the *Messiah*, as declared by all the Prophets, that, after the Death of *Solomon* and Revolt of the ten Tribes, he should restore the Kingdom to *Israel*, and establish it for ever, or to the end of the World, in the House or Line of *David*: and this is so very evident, from the Books themselves, as to need no further Proof. But, as *Jesus* did not effect this while he lived, there could be no other Hope in expectation from him, as the *Messiah*, but his rising again from the Dead, and coming, with a sufficient Power from Heaven, to bring about such a Work and fulfil these Prophecies. Without this, his own Apostles and Disciples must have given him up, and could never have believed in him as the promis'd *Messiah*; nor could they ever have preach'd him, as such, to the *Jewish* Nation. No Man in *Israel* could ever have believed in *Jesus*, as the *Christ*, had he not risen again from the Dead, in order to restore the Kingdom, in the known Sense of all the Prophets and of this whole People from first to last. They had great Reason therefore to
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lay the Stress here, and to insist upon this as the single decisive Point ; for otherwise either *Jesus* must have been a false Prophet, or else they had never had any true Prophet before : for had he wrought ever so many Miracles in his Life, or his Followers in his Name after his Death, this could not have prov'd him to have been the *Messiah*, the Saviour or Deliverer of *Israel*, if he had not personally restored the Kingdom in the concurrent Sense of all the Prophets, and of the whole Nation.

But tho' all the antient Prophets should be given up, as either Enthusiasts or Impostors, as to what they prophesied concerning the *Messiah* ; yet still the Truth of Christianity, as such, or as a Matter of Revelation, must depend on the Resurrection of *Christ* from the Dead ; and nothing could support it without this.

But Mr. *Chubb* has found out other Ends and Reasons of *Christ's* Resurrection, of greater consequence than proving himself to be the true promised *Messiah*, and, thereby, clearing himself from the Charge of Imposture,
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for which he had been put to death. He thinks, or seems to think, that the proper Ends and Reasons of *Christ's* Resurrection were, that he might gather his Disciples together, to commission them to preach the Gospel to all Nations, and to qualify them for, and support them in such a Work, by sending down the Holy Ghost upon them. But, with submission, these could be no Reasons at all, and it can hardly be supposed, that Mr. *Chubb* should really think them so. For *Christ* might have given his Apostles their Commission, while he had been still living among them, and God might afterwards have qualify'd and supported them by the Gift of Tongues, the Power of working Miracles, or any other necessary Encouragements and Assistances, whether *Jesus* had risen again from the Dead or not; and therefore *Christ's* Resurrection, according to Mr. *Chubb*, was not necessary at all to any of the Purposes of Christianity: Since the End, for any thing we can see to the contrary, might as well have been obtain'd without it.

But Mr. *Chubb*, in his next Tract, is still more mysterious; where he attempts to solve the

the great Difficulty with respect to *Abraham's* being commanded by God to offer up his Son, even his only Son *Isaac*, the Son and Heir of the Promise, as a Sacrifice of Burnt-Offering unto the Lord. And here he endeavours to prove, that God might fitly and reasonably, as a *Matter of Religion and Conscience*, for this is the Case, enjoin *Abraham* a piece of Service which was wrong and unfit in it self, or in the Nature and Reason of things; or, which is the same thing, that God might make it his Duty, and an Act of Religion and Conscience in him, to intend and resolve upon a thing that ought not to be done: For this Intention and Resolution, formed upon the Command and Authority of God, contained the whole Morality and Religion, or, rather, the whole Immorality and Irreligion of the Action; and the outward Overt-Act not being afterwards executed, could not alter the Case either with respect to God or *Abraham*.

But Mr. *Chubb* pretends to prove, by an Instance, that a Command may be reasonable and fit, where the Action or Thing commanded is unrighteous and wrong; and to make

make this out, he instances in the Case of *Solomon's* commanding to divide a living Child between two Women, who both claim'd it as their own. But this Instance is so far from being to his Purpose, that it plainly proves the quite contrary to what he has brought it for; and if, to make the Case parallel, he would have put *Solomon* in the place of God, he must, instead of justifying *Solomon*, blame the Almighty.

For, in the first place, it was necessary in *Solomon* to make such a Tryal, in order to discover the true Mother of the Child, and make a right Judgment, so as to do Justice between the two Claimants, which he could not otherwise have done. But God surely could be under no such necessity of tempting or trying *Abraham*, to inform himself how he would act, or determine himself, in this, or any other, Case proposed to him. The Searcher of Hearts could not want to teach or inform himself, by Experience, of what was in Man. And besides, the Command of *Solomon*, supposing he had required an unfit Action, could not bind any Man, in point of Religion and Conscience, to Obedience,

dience, as the Command of God always does; and must, unless God should afterwards revoke his own Orders, repent of his Command, and make it a Man's Duty not to do what he had made it his Duty to do before: and from hence, perhaps, it may be thought that Mr. *Chubb* has not yet well weigh'd this Case, but that he ought to think of the Matter once more, and give it a Third Consideration.

But, for my own part, I cannot help thinking that the only rational Conclusion to be drawn from this Case, as the Story has been handed down to us, is, that *Abraham* might be some way or other mistaken in this matter, and might imagine that he had such a Command from God when he had not, or, at least, could not possibly prove it to others: and that consequently whoever believes the Story, as now told, must take it upon *Abraham's* sole Authority, or, perhaps still lower, upon the Authority of After-Copiers and Transcribers, who may have omitted several Circumstances, which might have enabled one to have made a better Judgment about it. But if *Abraham* may be

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thought to have been here deceiv'd, or that he intended hereby to convince the Heathens. about him, that he was ready to pay the same Worship and Homage to the true God, as they did to their Idols; and, consequently, that he would not be behind-hand, with them, in any Matter of Obedience to the true God. I say, if this Case may be put, it may be easily conceived that God herein interposed, in an extraordinary way, to prevent an ill Design, and thereby to convince this great Patriarch of his Mistake and Folly. But, 'tis most reasonable to suppose, that the Notion of human Sacrifices, as of the highest Value and Efficacy with God, as Free-will Offerings in extraordinary Cases, was at this time a current Doctrine, even among those who worship'd only the one true God; and that *Abraham* had not yet got rid of all the old Prejudices and Prepossessions of his Family, and Countrymen, while they were under a State of Idolatry. I mean, that the Patriarch was sincere in this Case, and prov'd his Faith to be sound, tho' he could not well clear his Understanding. 'Tis, I think, very plain, that *Abraham* could have no Notion that human Sacrifices were
contrary

contrary to the Law of Nature, or inconsistent with the Moral Perfections of God : had he but suspected this, he must have boggled a little more upon it. He must have pleaded for his first-born and most beloved Son, the Son and Heir of the Promise, as he did for the Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, as he had much more Reason ; or he must have begg'd, at least, that, if the thing must be done, he himself might not be the Executioner. He must have considered with himself, whether he could be more certain of such a positive Command from God, than he was of the Will of God, in Nature and Reason, to the contrary ; or, whether God, by a positive Command, was now about to divest him of all the tender Affections and Sympathies of Humanity. But we don't find that he had any such Doubts, or Scruples, in his Mind about it ; and, therefore, his Resolution upon it was quick and Sudden, at least, if not rash and Inconsiderate. And, indeed, that *Abraham* either had, or could have, any such Command from God, cannot possibly appear to us, however it might appear to him. 'Tis a plain Case then, to me, that this

holy Patriarch, as good a Man as he was, and as great a Reformer of the World about him, had not yet thoroughly freed himself from all the Prejudices, and Idolatrous Customs of his Family and Education. But this, however, may be said in favour of *Abraham*, and to his Honour, that he was readily disposed to part with any thing, tho' ever so dear to him, in Obedience and Resignation to the Will of God. And as this was an excellent Spirit and Temper of Mind, it might deserve to be recorded as worthy of Imitation; but, that *Abraham* had really any such Command from God, or that he was not in this case mistaken, has never yet been prov'd, and, as I imagine, never will; unless Mr. *Chubb* should think of the Matter again.

But this Prepossession of the super-eminent Merit and Value of human Sacrifices, as Free-will Offerings, or Acts of Supererogation, in extraordinary Cases, continued down for many hundred Years in *Abraham's* Family, or among those who were descended from him and profess'd his Religion, *i. e.* to be the *Unitarians*, or Worshippers

shippers of the one only true God. And that *Moses*, the famous Lawgiver of *Israel*, proceeded upon this Supposition, in the Constitution of his Law, I shall now prove.

In the last Chapter of *Leviticus* we have a Digest of the Laws concerning Vows, or Dedications of Persons, Beasts, or Things to the Lord. And of these, as is evident from the Law itself, there were two sorts, which, for Distinction's sake, I shall call the General or Conditional, and the Special or Absolute Vow. In the General or Conditional Vow, the Person, Beast, or Thing dedicated to the Lord, *i. e.* to the *Church*, or *Temple*, was not to be separated from the use of Man by Burning, or other Destruction, but a Value was to be set upon it by the Priests, where the Law had not fix'd it before ; and this Valuation being registred and made a Matter of Record, there remained a Right of Redemption, to the original Proprietor and Owner, provided the Redemption should be made, and the Money paid, at any time before the next ensuing Jubilee : but in case of such Failure, the Right of Redemption was cut off, excepting

cepting in Lands of Inheritance, which could be only sold, or given, to the Jubilee, and must afterwards return to the Family. In the Human Kind the Prices of Redemption were fix'd and settled by Law, which the Priest could not alter; namely, from twenty Years old to sixty, fifty Shekels of the Sanctuary for a Male, and thirty for a Female; from five Years old to twenty, the Valuation, for a Male was to be twenty, and for a Female ten, Shekels; from a Month old to five Years, the Price of the Male was five, and of the Females three, Shekels; and from sixty Years old, and above, the Valuation for a Male was fifteen, and for a Female ten, Shekels. Thus stood the Law with respect to the Human Kind, but in every thing else, whether Beast, House, Land, or Goods, the Priest was left at liberty to set his own Value, and then there could be no Right of Redemption, but by paying a fifth part over and above the Priest's Valuation. Now here the Priests were made *Pawn-Brokers*, in which the Owner, or original Proprietor, was sure to have the worst Bargain, as he would, in

all probability, be the best Chap or highest Bidder.

And thus stood the Case in Law with regard to the General or Conditional Vow, and Dedications of Persons, Beasts, or Things to the *Lord*, or to the *Priest*; as will be evident, to any one, by looking over the twenty-seven first Verses of this Chapter. But at Verse the twenty-eighth, the special Case in Law comes in, and is particularly excepted and provided for, notwithstanding any thing before said with respect to General Vows. For, notwithstanding the foregoing Laws relating to General Vows; or the Dedication of Redeemables, it is especially declared, that any thing vow'd Absolutely should be irredeemable; and if it was a living Creature, either Man, or Beast, it must surely *die the Death*. Ver. 28, 29. *Notwithstanding, nothing separate from the common Use, that a Man doth separate unto the Lord, of all that he hath, whether it be Man or Beast, or Land of his Inheritance, may be sold or redeemed; for every thing separate from the common Use is most holy unto the Lord. Nothing (no Person,*
or

or Beast) separate from the common Use: which shall be separate from Man, shall be redeem'd, but die the Death.

Now this, I think, is plain Law, and I cannot see how the Statute will be set aside. But, to clear up the Matter a little farther, I shall here give an Instance which comes up fully and directly to the Point, and in which this Law was actually executed. You will easily perceive, Sir, that what I here aim at is the Case of *Jephtha's* Daughter, which we have recorded in the eleventh Chapter of the Book of *Judges*, and which was in short this; *Jephtha*, then in Exile, was recalled by his Countrymen, and made their chief Captain, in order to a War against the *Ammonites*, from whom, at that time, they were in the utmost Danger. He comes home, accepts the Commission, and thereupon vowd a Vow unto the Lord, that, if God would give him the Victory, and bring him back again in Peace and Safety, whatsoever should first come out of his House to meet him, at his Return, should be given up as a Sacrifice of Burnt-Offering unto the Lord. He undertakes the War, gains the most
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signal and complete Victory, and comes back in Peace and Triumph, ver. 32, 33. But at his Return in this Triumph, who should first come out to meet him but his own Daughter and only Child, followed with Musick and Dances, to welcome him home and celebrate the joyful Day : but the Consternation and Confusion, the Grief, Anguish, and Distraction of the Father, upon this Occasion, may be better imagin'd than express'd. He rent his Clothes, and in the utmost Agony and Distress of Mind, cry'd out, *Alas ! my Daughter thou hast brought me low, and art one of those who trouble me ; for I have open'd my Mouth unto the Lord, and cannot go back,* ver. 35. But the young Lady took this with an Heroick Patience and Resolution, as it could not now be recalled or revoked ; and she comforted herself with this, that her Country, however, had been saved by her Father, who had come off with Glory, tho' she herself must be an innocent Victim to it : and therefore she only begg'd for a Reprieve of two Months, or that her Father would, at least, do thus much for her, to suffer her to retire to the Mountains two Months, with

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other Maids her Companions and Acquaintance, there to *bewail her Virginity*, as she had not yet known Man, and must now die childless; which was always reckoned an Unhappiness in *Israel*, and even a Reproach, when a married Woman had not Children, ver. 36, 37, 38. This Request being granted, and the Time expired, she returned; and then her Father executed his Vow upon her, or *did unto her according to his Vow*, and offered her up as a Burnt-Offering unto the Lord, ver. 39. Here, then, is a plain Case in Fact, in which the Law, as before mention'd and explain'd, was actually put in execution. *Jephtha* had made a special absolute Vow, which he could not revoke, without violating the Law, upon which he must have been put to death himself, and yet could not have saved his Daughter neither, who was dead in Law before.

Nothing can be more trifling or absurd than what some would urge here, that this young Virgin Lady was not made a Sacrifice of Burnt-Offering, but only vow'd to perpetual Virginity. But this is contrary to the express Text, which assures us, that her Father

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ther had vow'd her as a Burnt-Offering, and that he did accordingly, or executed his Vow after two Months. And besides, such Reasoners do not consider, that there were no Nunneries, or Vows of Virginity, admitted in *Israel*; and that this must have been as contrary to the Law, as it would have been in *Jephtha* to have violated his Oath. And 'tis evident, that the Circumstance of her being a Maiden, and an only Child, is particularly mentioned and insisted on here, only, to aggravate the Calamity; since so eminent a Family in *Israel*, and all the farther Issue of so renown'd a Conqueror, must, upon this occasion, be extinct and die with her.

But to set this Matter still in a clearer Light, it need only be considered farther, that, presently after the *Exodus*, God is represented as putting in his Claim of Right to all the First-born of *Israel*, as a just Acknowledgment for his having slain all the First-born of *Egypt*, and delivered them out of that cruel Bondage. And tho' this righteous Demand, which might be thought, perhaps, a little too rigorous, was afterwards

mitigated, or possibly remitted, by an Act of Grace, in which God was pleas'd to accept all the Males of the Tribe of *Levi*, in lieu of all the First-born Males of the other Tribes, as the *Redemption*, or *Price of their Lives*; yet this Gratuity could not alter the original Right and Claim as before. And consequently this whole People must have believed this Doctrine of Human Sacrifices, and their peculiar Value and Efficacy with God, when they were given as Free-will Offerings; I say, they must have believed this Doctrine, as much as they could believe any other Doctrine, as coming from God. And, indeed, God's giving them back the First-born, and not insisting on them as a legal Due, laid them under the stronger Obligation of making him some Free-will Offerings, of this kind, in extraordinary Cases. And then such Atonements were looked upon as a sort of Supererogation, and peculiarly meritorious, as being the highest possible Acts of Religious Obedience, not strictly enjoind by Law. And this, I may venture to say, was the general Opinion and Belief of the whole World, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, before the Christian Dispensation.

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'Tis true, indeed, that all civilized Nations; both *Jews* and *Heathens*, had all along pretty right Notions of Virtue and Moral Obligations; but, as they resolved this into the wrong Principle of *Positive Will*, their Priests had, in effect, set it aside by their pretended Revelations, Oracles, Miracles, and Prophecies.

This was certainly the Case among the Heathens; nor was it much better among the *Jews*, who paid the same sort of Worship, Obedience, and Homage to the true God, that the Heathens did to their Idols: and this from the same Principle of resolving every thing into *Positive Will*, as having no prior, immutable, and moral Characters, whereby to judge of the Will of God. And from hence we find the closest Treacheries and most open Violence, the most notorious and repeated Perjuries and Violations of solemn Oaths, the most cruel and outrageous Slaughters, Butcheries, and Devastation of Countries, against all the Principles of Humanity and the Law of Nations, the most detestable and execrable Massacres, Rebellions, Murders, and unnatural

tural Civil Wars; and, in short, whatever can be imagined as contrary to the eternal and immutable Law of moral Truth and Righteousness, all carry'd on and perpetrated in the name of the Lord; and supported upon the Pretensions of Dreams, Visions, and Voices. But such sort of Communications from God, without any moral intrinsic Characters to judge of them, can only be ascribed, either, to the Artifice and Imposture of the Priests, or to the Superstition and Hypochondriasm of the Prophets. And therefore, I cannot but think, that Christianity, by restoring the moral Character and Criterion between Truth and Falshood in Religion, has been of infinite Service to the World; and that we ought to thank God, as much, for being delivered from the Vassalage and Darkness of Judaism, as from Paganism it self.

But, since the Business of Sacrifices has all along made so much Noise in the World, and the Subject, at present, seems to be pretty much in the dark; I shall consider this Matter a little farther. The word *Sacrifice*, in general, signifies some particular Act of Obedience, with which God is supposed to be

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well pleas'd, as a thing agreeable to his Will, and for which he is inclined to accept and favour the Obedient: and from hence, the Praises, Thanksgivings, and Devotions of the Penitent and Sincere, have been called Sacrifices, and been looked upon as propitiating and atoning the Deity, and disposing him to favour and reward such as offer up these Services to him. But, as Repentance, Reformation, or sincere Obedience for the future, is the natural Condition of Pardon, and what has been ever enjoin'd by all the Laws of God, from the Beginning of the World to this Day, the Words Sacrifice, Atonement, Propitiation, &c. have been commonly taken in a more restrain'd Sense, for such free and voluntary Acts of Obedience and Resignation to the Will of God, or of the Gods, as particular and extraordinary Acts of Piety, Munificence, Mercy, and Charity, where Men are under no strict Obligation or Penalty in Law; and consequently, where the Obedience may be considered as entirely free, and not directly specified, enjoin'd, or enforce'd by Law. And thus all Acts of Bounty and Liberality, the free Donations
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of the Rich and Wealthy to the Poor, or to the Church for pious Uses, and where there was no prior Obligation in Law, or strict Justice, the free Gifts offered to the Temple among the *Jews*, and all the great publick Festivals of the Antients, in which the Poor were freely received and entertained at the Cost of the Rich, were called, in this peculiar restrain'd Sense, *Sacrifices*, and look'd upon as highly pleasing and acceptable to the Deity, and were, consequently, considered as the most effectual Propitiations and Atonements for past Sins.

And here the more dear and valuable the thing parted with was, to the Possessor, the more pleasing and acceptable was the Gift supposed to be, while it was offered in Obedience and Resignation to the Will of God; and consequently, the giving up a First-born, or an only Son or Daughter, must needs be thought a higher Act of Obedience, and a stronger Proof of an absolute Trust and Confidence in God, than any thing else. And therefore, from a beautiful use of this Metaphor, in the New Testament, as sinful Lusts and Pleasures are very dear and valuable

valuable to the carnal Mind, a Sinner is supposed to make an acceptable Offering to God, when he crucifies the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts, sacrifices the old Man, and puts to death, or destroys, the Body of Sin within him: things more dear and valuable to him, than a right Hand or a right Eye, or even than a First-born or an only Child. And this is the common and establish'd Acceptation of the Words *Sacrifice, Attenuation, Propitiation, &c.* as they have been used in all Ages, and by all Authors whether Sacred or Profane.

But no sooner had the Priests got this by the handle, and well settled it upon the Minds of Men, but they began to make a proper use of it to their own Advantage, and to confine the Notion, or, at least, the chief Merit of Sacrifices, to what they call'd Deodands, or Gifts to the Lord, *i. e.* Donations to the Church, or to themselves, whether they were enjoin'd by Law or not; and for this Reason they made the latter most meritorious, as being sure of the former both from Good and Bad, Saints and Sinners; whereas,

whereas they could depend on this of Free-will Offerings, or mere voluntary Gifts, from none but Fools. And therefore the Fools, who were sure to be most in number, were always their greatest Devotees, and never fail'd of the Pardon of their Sins.

Nothing could have given the Priests more Power and Influence over such a wretched and grossly superstitious People, than this Notion of the Value and Efficacy of Human Sacrifices. Since it must have been in the Priest's power to require them, at any time, by a Voice from the Oracle, or any other pretended Revelation; besides the many Forfeitures, of this kind, which must have been continually made by Law.

But what farther advanced the Power of the Priests under this Law, was the Trial of Jealousy, which, in effect, put all the Women of the Country into the Priest's hands, to be disposed of at his pleasure, and to be saved, or poison'd, upon any little Suspicion or Complaint of the Husband, whether with or without ground; for the Husband's bare Suspicion, without any Cause assign'd, was sufficient

ficient to put any Woman upon this Trial. We have this Law recorded in the fifth Chapter of *Numbers*, from the eleventh Verse to the end. The Case, in short, is this; if a Man was mov'd with a jealous Mind towards his Wife, and thought she had been unfaithful to him, whether he could offer any Reasons for it or no, he was to bring her to the Priest, who was to give her a Draught of cursed and bitter Water, with an Oath of Cursing, that if she had been guilty of what she was suspected of, her Belly should swell, and her Thighs rot, upon taking the Dose, to which the Woman was to say *Amen*, *Amen*; i. e. this Draught was to poison her, or prove her innocent, as she was guilty or not guilty. Now it must here be observed, that this Dose was a Secret in the Priest's own hands, or a Potion of his own Preparation, and that nobody could know what he put into it but himself. But, had there been here any extraordinary Interposition, the Woman might have drank Water out of her own Well, Wine out of her own Cask, or any other common Liquor at her own Choice and Pleasure, and God could have directed

the Event so as to have answered the purpose of such a Trial. But, as this whole Management was left to the private Act and Judgment of the Priest, 'tis evident that he might dispose absolutely of the Event, and either save or poison any Woman, as she had either pleas'd or displeas'd her Ghostly Father: and how far this must put all the Women of *Israel* into the hands of the Priest, I would leave any one to judge.

Another Article, which vastly encreas'd the Priestly Power under the Law, was, the high and exorbitant Taxes and Payments ordered as Doodands and legal Dues to the Church. And had I here time to enter into this Argument, which I must reserve to another Opportunity, it might be easily prov'd, as it some time or other will, that the legal Dues, or Payments, exacted by Law, of one kind or other, amounted to the whole annual Rent, or full twenty Shillings in the Pound, upon all the Lands in the Country, besides all that the Priests had an Opportunity to gull and rife the People of, under the pretence of Free-will Offerings, as necessary

cessary Dues to the Lord. And these Exactions were so very hard and severe that they could not be born, which made this Nation so prone to Idolatry; the Worship of the true God being so vastly expensive, that they chose rather to worship any other God, who would accept them upon easier Terms. And, from hence, ten of the twelve Tribes revolted, at once, upon the Death of *Solomon*, and made them Priests of their own, from the meanest of the People, as not being able to maintain the Priests of the Lord in a legal way. And this was doubtless a most hopeful Constitution, which no Church or Clergy upon Earth would ever give up, as a Free-will Offering to the Lord.

'Tis very plain, that no Pagan Priests in the World ever carry'd their independent Claims upon the People so high as the *Jewish* and *Christian* Priests, who had gone so far, as to resolve almost all Religion into their own *Wealth* and *Power*, and to strip the rest of Mankind of all *Conscience* and *Property*. And tho' our Reformation from Popery delivered us, in great measure, from these

these *Spiritual Wickednesses in high Places*; yet there are not a few, even of our *Reformed Priests*, who still discover a strong Itch or Inclination to lead us back again into the Plan of the old *Jewish* Hierarchy, which had been found worse and more insufferable of the two, than the *Egyptian* Bondage; and which, afterwards, was very well copy'd, and even, in some things, improved by the Church of *Rome*. And therefore, I hope the Christian Laity will, from henceforth, be always watchful and upon their Guard, to secure themselves against the first Encroachments of this Priestly or Church Power, which has always proved a most formidable Monster, and is, I believe, *St. John's great red Dragon* in the *Revelations*.

But, to return to the main Point from which I have a little digress'd, the most natural Consequence, to be drawn from what I have observ'd about Sacrifices, is this; That every Man's own Sacrifice was ever consider'd as his own Act of Obedience, his own personal Gift, Donation, or Offering, and that

that no Man could ever receive any Benefit of Pardon or Acceptance with God, from the Sacrifice, Gift, or Offering of another, farther than as others might take example by it, and recommend themselves to God, in the same way of Obedience. Under the Law, every Man was to offer his own Sacrifice for himself alone ; and the daily Sacrifices and publick Festivals, where all were entertained and had equal Benefit, were the common Gift and Contributions of the whole People, in which every Man was tax'd his Share. And, since a Sacrifice was always understood to be some Act of Obedience, highly pleasing to God, 'tis impossible, in the Nature and Reason of things, that one Man's Obedience or Sin should be imputed to another, so as that other should be rewarded or punished for it, under a State of moral Government : for nothing can be more evident than this, that Obedience and Disobedience, Merit and Demerit, are inseparable from the individual Subjects or Persons themselves, and cannot be communicated, or transferred, from one Person, or individual Subject, to another. No Man,
 who

who is under a Law from God, can, in obedience to such Law, do more than his Duty; or, if he should do something that he was not strictly bound to by Law, and thereby entitle himself to a greater Reward, yet he cannot hereby merit any thing for another. And this will hold good, not only with regard to Men, but Angels, Archangels, and every subordinate derived Being whatever.

It may here be observed farther, that the Notion of vicarious Sacrifices, or of God's accepting one Life for another, and, by a Commutation of Merit and Demerit, punishing the Innocent for the Guilty; I say, this Notion is entirely modern and new, and had been never known or heard of among the *Jews*, or in any other Nation even under the grossest Darkness of Paganism: and therefore, 'tis most astonishing, indeed, that such a Principle should ever have prevailed among Christians, under the clearer Light of the Gospel. 'Tis as plain as Day-light, that, under the *Jewish Theocratick State*, where God himself is supposed to have been the
sole

sole Legislator, there was no such thing as Prerogative, no dispensing Power reserv'd, or Right of Pardons above Law in any Case whatever. If the Offence had been made capital by Law, the Offender must die the Death; and he had no vicarious Sacrifice, no Appeal, or Plea of Pardon, to be admitted or taken out. Or if the legal Penalty was Imprisonment, Banishment, Servitude to the Year of Jubilee, a pecuniary Mulct, or a Sacrifice, Deodand, or Fine to the Church, the Law, in all these Cases, must be punctually complied with, and there could be no Pardon allow'd or pleaded. Now what Propitiations and Atonements could signify, under such a Law, where there could be no Pardon or Remission, I should be glad to know; or whether the Priest's pretending to make the Atonement, by his own Action of sprinkling the Sacrificial Blood, after the Man had fully satisfied the Law, paid his Dues, and there could be no farther Demand upon him, was not the most errant Priestcraft, and the most notorious Cheat in the World? And till this Question can be fairly answered, I shall be content to leave this

R Flexman Matter

Matter just where it is, and where, as I imagine, it must always stand,

But I shall here farther shew, that this absurd *Antinomian* Doctrine of Satisfaction, imputed Righteousness, or redundant transferable Merit, must, in its necessary Consequences, subvert and destroy the whole Christian Scheme, and with it, all Religion whether Natural or Reveal'd.

'Tis evident, that a prior, full, and complete Satisfaction made, must be inconsistent with the free Pardon of Sin, or with Justification as an Act of Grace; for no Person can forgive or remit any Debt, Due, or Demand, after full Satisfaction has been made: since the not punishing, or the not executing the Law, in this Case, must be an Act of Justice, and not of Grace. 'Tis here commonly said, that this Satisfaction was *quid recusabile*, something that might have been refused, and that therefore the accepting of it was free and gratuitous. But this was either a just and Reasonable Satisfaction or not. If the Satisfaction was just and reasonable,

ble, it could not be refused by any just and reasonable Person, who would not punish meerly for Punishment's sake, when all his Rights and Claims might be as well secured without it. But if it was not a just and reasonable Satisfaction, it could be no Satisfaction at all, nor be accepted as such.

But 'tis urg'd farther, that Pardon is still free and gratuitous, because God found out this Method of Satisfaction for Sin, which no other Being could have done. But this is only saying that God contriv'd or found out a way, of satisfying, or paying himself. Which cannot in the least prove, that the Pardon of Sin is free, or an Act of Grace, or that the whole Honour is not due to the Surety, who has fully discharg'd the Account, and none at all to the Principal or Creditor, who, without a prior full Satisfaction, could have forgiven nothing. And consequently that Mercy is not an essential Attribute of God, and that he cannot pardon Sins at all upon Repentance and Reformation. But this is a Supposition, so abhorrent to Nature and Reason, and so destructive

of all religious Trust and Dependance upon God, that it cannot possibly be admitted.

It may be consider'd farther, that Christ himself was under a Law from God which he was bound to obey ; and that his Obedience unto Death was a necessary Act of Submission and Resignation to God, which he could not be excused from ; tho' he passionately desired it, and spent a whole Night in Fasting, Watching, and Prayer to God for it, that, if possible, this Cup might pass from him. Since therefore this was a necessary Obligation upon him, which could not be dispensed with, there could be no Supererogative or redundant Merit in it : Nay, so far as it can appear to us, *Christ* himself did not know, but the Night before he suffered, that he was to die for the Salvation of the World, that he had made any such Covenant with the Father, or that God had any such settled determinate Purpose and Resolution concerning him. Had he known this, he would not have struggled so earnestly against the known Will, and determinate Purpose of God, which he him-

self had before agreed to, and which was necessary to the Salvation of a whole World of lost perishing Creatures. Doubtless when, in such Anguish, he begg'd that, if possible, the Cup might pass from him, he did not know but it might be possible, and that God might find out some way or other for his Deliverance. For, otherwise, this would not have been meer human Frailty or Infirmary, but a sinful Aversion and criminal Reluctancy to the Will of God, retracting his own Covenant-Engagements, and giving up the Salvation of Mankind, only, to save himself from a little present Suffering. But nothing of this can be supposed or imagined of the greatest Prophet, and most righteous Person that ever appeared in the World.

But this Hope of a miraculous Deliverance, even from the Cross, is what the Holy *Jesus* seems to have entertain'd to his last Moments, while the *Jews* were mocking and deriding him; this is the Son of God, this is the King of *Israel*, this is our *Messiah*, Saviour, and Deliverer, *he saved others,*
himself

himself he cannot save, let him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe in him. No doubt but such a Deliverance at this time, would have struck the whole Multitude, both *Jews* and *Romans*, with the strongest Conviction. It would have been an Evidence not to be resisted, and even much beyond that of the Resurrection, since the whole World, or some out of all Countries, must have been Witnesses to it. And as *Christ* the Night before, which he spent in the utmost Strivings and Wrestlings with God, for a Deliverance by his interposing Power, must have had some Hope or Expectation of it; so, possibly, he might even now while he was suffering upon the Cross; otherwise, what should he mean by that Exclamation just before he expired? *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* He could not think that God had really forsaken him, as his most beloved Son, or withdrawn his Favour from him, whilst he was performing the last and highest Act of Obedience to his Will. But *why hast thou forsaken me?* or why hast thou not, now at last, heard and answered my Prayers, as thou hadst

hadst always done before ? Why am I, now, left to this cruel and ignominious Death, when thy interposing Power, in answer to my earnest Supplications, might have delivered me, to the full Conviction, or utter Confusion, of all Unbelievers.

But what is most shocking and confounding in this Doctrine of Satisfaction, is the Consequences of it ; that, if it be true, it must suppose that *Christ* died, to make Satisfaction for Disobedience to himself, to nullify and destroy the whole Force and Obligation of his own Laws, and to justify and save Men without Repentance. Any Prince, for very wise and good Reasons, such as Compassion to his Subjects, Willingness to shew his Clemency, the Love he bears to his Son and Heir, and the Honour he designs to bestow upon him, &c. may publish an Act of Grace, or Indemnity for all *past Offences* ; provided the rebellious Subjects will come in, cease all Hostilities, and continue loyal and peaceable for the time to come. But an Act of Grace, or Indemnity for all *future Offences*, of what nature

nature or kind soever, provided Men do not die in open Rebellion, but beg Pardon, profess their Sorrow, and promise Amendment some time or other before they go out of the World ; I say, such an Act of Grace as this, must be absolutely inconsistent with all Law and Government whatever ; such a Law would be a meer dead Letter, and the Subject would, in reality, be left lawless.

And yet this is the very Case of *Christ's* Government under the Gospel, if the common Notions of it be right. 'Tis evident, that the word *Repentance*, as commonly used, signifies nothing but begging Pardon, professing Sorrow, and promising to reform for time to come ; and this Men may do every Day of their Lives, or at last upon a Death-Bed, without ever truly repenting of, or *forsaking* any one Sin. But the word *Repentance*, in Scripture, always signifies Reformation, Newness of Life, or forsaking Sin : And if any Prayers, Professions, or Promises, might be taken for Reformation and a good Life, the way to Salvation, by the Grace of the Gospel, would be very easy.

But

But this is turning the Grace of God into Wantonness, or encouraging Sin that Grace may abound. 'Tis an original fundamental Law of Christianity, and even of Nature itself, that God will judge all Men according to their Works, or reward and punish them hereafter, in consequence of the Deeds done in the Body, whether they have been good or evil: and no Doctrine can be true, that is inconsistent with this grand Principle and Rule of Judgment. God will bring *every Work* into Judgment, and every Man's Acts, either of Obedience or Disobedience, in order to reward, or punish, upon a just balance, or, according to the Prevalence, or Preponderancy, of their good and evil Actions, thro' the whole Course of their Lives,

That God, in the Day of Reckoning, will blot out and bring into Oblivion, all the Actions of a long wicked Life, for the sake of some short Reformation at last; and, on the other hand, cancel, obliterate and set aside, all the Services and good Actions of a long, exemplary, and useful Life, on

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account of some Defection and Failure towards the Close of Life, is a Doctrine which cannot be true, as being contrary to that great Law and Rule of Righteousness and Judgment, which he has declared he will proceed upon in this Case. Such a Principle, therefore, would be setting up the Merits of *Christ* in opposition to his Laws, and pleading the Grace of the Gospel against all the Obligations to a good Life as necessary to Salvation; making nothing penal, under the Gospel, but final Impenitency, or a Man's dying in his Sins ; and, consequently, supposing *Christ* to be really, and in effect, no Lawgiver or Governour at all, but that his whole Dispensation, from one end of Life to the other, is all mere Grace without Obedience.

But, beside the Nature and Reason of the thing, I shall now endeavour to prove, that what I have here advanc'd, is perfectly agreeable to Scripture, and the very Doctrine of Repentance and Pardon, which *Christ* himself, and the Apostles preach'd and declared

clared, to the World, at the first Publication of Christianity.

'Tis evident, that when the Apostles came to preach the Gospel to the whole World, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, they offered them a general Act of Grace, or Indemnity for all *past Sins*; that no Acts of Idolatry, or moral Wickedness, committed, under their former State of Ignorance and Darkness, before they had the true Knowledge of God and their Duty, should be ever charg'd upon them, or brought into Judgment against them; provided they would now come in, receive the Truth, engage themselves in the Christian Baptismal Covenant to Holiness and Newness of Life, and faithfully keep this Covenant for the Remainder of their Lives. But they did not extend this Pardon, or Indemnity, to all *future* Violations of this Covenant, or to any wilful presumptuous Sins which might be committed against it; for this must have been binding and loosing them at once, and destroying the whole Design. But, on the contrary, the Apostles declared, that in case Men violated this their

Baptismal or Christian Covenant, after they had publickly, and solemnly, entered into and engaged themselves in it, they must forfeit the whole Benefit of it, and could never more plead any such Grace for Pardon: but that they must afterwards stand upon the common Law of Forgiveness, and be judg'd according to the whole Course of their Actions, or the Deeds done in the Body.

For it is impossible that they, who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good Word of God, and of the Powers of the World to come, if they fall away should be renewed again by Repentance, since they crucify to themselves again the Son of God, and make a mock of him or put him to open Shame. Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.*

It

* I have rendered εἰς μετάνοιαν by *Repentance*, as in all the old Versions of our *English Bible*, and not *unto Repentance*, as in the last Translation; as if the Apostle had maintain'd it as impossible ever to bring Men to Repentance, after they had sinned wilfully and presumptuously under the Gospel, which makes him assert a thing contrary to Truth in Fact, and to common Sense. The Præposition εἰς never stands
for

It must be observ'd, that the Apostle does not here say that, after such a Defection, it was impossible to bring Men again to Repentance, or, that they could not afterwards repent and reform. But that it was impossible to *renew* them again *by Repentance*, or to restore them to the same State and Privilege of a full and free Pardon of all *past Sins*, so as never to have them mentioned, or brought into account in Judgment against them, supposing their Repentance. And what is here to be understood by this *falling away*, the same Apostle explains, himself, to be wilful and presumptuous sinning against their Baptismal Vow, or Christian Covenant. *For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins*; Heb. x. 26.

or

for *to* or *unto*, unless where it denotes some Loco-Motion to, or towards, a Place, or an Inclination to, or towards, a Thing; but where it denotes the Cause, Means, or Instrumentality of effecting a Thing, it is the same, in Construction, with the *Latin* Prepositions *per*, *pro*, and *propter*. And thus such Apostates or Delinquents, as the Apostle had been speaking of, could not be renewed or restored *per Pœnitentiam*, *pro Causa*, *vel*, *propter Causam*, *Pœnitentia*, as I have understood and apply'd it.

or no further pleading any *peculiar Grace* of the Gospel. And if such a Course of wilful presumptuous Sin under the Gospel, and against the Christian Covenant, be continued in, and not overballanced by Reformation and a Holy Life, there can remain nothing, to the Sinner, but *a fearful Expectation of Judgment and the Indignation of violent Fire*, ver. 27.

It ought farther to be carefully observ'd here, that the Punishment of Sin in another Life, as threatened in the Gospel, is, only, to be understood of wilful and presumptuous Sinning, against Knowledge and Conscience, and in Violation of Men's Baptifmal Vow, or Christian Covenant with God; and not of Sins of mere human Frailty, Inadvertency, or Surprize, where there could be no ill Intention, or Malice and Obstinacy, in the Heart. And tho' we ought to repent of, and forsake, all such Sins, as soon as we come to see and know them, and to beg pardon for our Weakness, Folly, and Inadvertency, and be the more upon our Watch and Guard for the future, yet they are not in their own
nature

nature damnable. St. *John*, in his Epistles, plainly makes this Distinction between Sins of mere human Weakness, Frailty, and Inadvertency, and wilful presumptuous Sins, against Light and Knowledge, and in Violation of the Gospel-Covenant. And this he calls Sinning unto Death; and not unto Death; in the first Sense, he declares that every Man is a Sinner, and that if any one should pretend to be without Sin, he must deceive himself and make God a Lyar: but, in the latter Sense of the Word, he declares and maintains, that whoever is born of God *sinneth not*, that his Seed remaineth in him so that he *cannot sin*, and that *whoever committeth Sin is of the Devil*. This Apostle, therefore, is so far from giving the least Expectation, or Hope, of Pardon by Gospel-Grace, to such wilful presumptuous Sinners, as had violated the Christian Covenant, and were fallen back into moral Wickedness, under the clearest Light, and against their own Convictions of the Truth; that, on the contrary, he does not so much as allow them to be pray'd for, or at all recommended

commended to the Grace of *Christ*, or any peculiar Favour of the Gospel; but leaves them, as Extrafoederates, to stand or fall by the common Law, or Rule of Judgment, as already explain'd.

These, I think, are the true Principles of Repentance and Pardon, so far as Men can recommend themselves to God by the Law of Nature, or by the Christian Law. But whether I am in the Right or not, I have, at least, given my Reasons for it, and brought them into as narrow a Compass as I could, that if any one should think fit to answer me, he need not be at much pains about it, or be put to the trouble of canvassing a large Book.

And now to conclude ; Whether any of our great and leading Divines will so far consider of this Matter, as to reform their Schemes upon it, and come, at last, to preach the original Doctrines of *Christ* and the Apostles; or whether they shall chuse rather to confute me, as the easier Task,

Task, must be left to themselves. But
in the mean while, I may assure you, Sir,
that I am, with the utmost Respect and
truest Friendship,

Your most obedient,

June 27. 1734.

humble Servant,

P. B. ✓



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P R O S T S C R I P T.

THERE are but three possible or conceivable Methods, or Grounds of Pardon, which I shall here just take notice of, to prevent any such Mistakes, or Objections, as might arise from the general Doctrine, as before laid down.

An Act of Grace or Pardon, therefore, may proceed, in the first place, from the mere Clemency of the Prince, or Person offended, his Compassion to the Rebels and Revolters, and his Willingness to encourage their future Loyalty and Obedience to so mild and merciful a Government, without any other Reason or Motive whatever.

Or, secondly, an Act of Indemnity for all past Offences, on condition of future Loyalty and Obedience, may be obtained by the Mediation and Intercession of some prime Minister, or chief Favourite at Court, where the Prince or Sovereign would not otherwise have granted it, or been disposed

to

to it. And tho' a Pardon, thus obtained, abates and takes off from the Royal Favour, yet it is still free, or an Act of Grace, because the Prince might rigorously have executed the Law, without regarding any such Intercession or Mediation.

But, in the last place, an Act of Grace and full and free Pardon for all past Offences, may be obtained by Repentance, and actual personal Obedience for the time to come, and by which, a sort of Satisfaction, Propitiation, or Atonement, is made by the Offender himself. And this is the only proper and literal Sense in which we can understand the Words Satisfaction, Atonement, Propitiation, &c. with regard to past Offences: Thus if a Man, who has been in open Arms and committed the most notorious Acts of Hostility, Rebellion, and Treason, against his King and Country, and who has hereupon escaped Justice, tho' not obtain'd a Pardon, shall, afterwards, freely and voluntarily change his whole Measures and Conduct, from a Conviction of his own Error, and, from thenceforth, give the most

fighal Proofs of his Loyalty and Fidelity in
 the Service of his King and Country, by
 performing more and greater Services, for
 the Prince's Honour and Interest, than ever
 he had done against him; such a Conversion
 and Reformation might be thought to me-
 rit or deserve a Pardon, from a wise and
 merciful Prince, upon the Foundation of a
 righteous moral Government, without any
 great Intercession used in behalf of such a
 Convert. And, in this way, a Man would
 be said to have made Satisfaction or Com-
 pensation, and to have pacified or atoned
 the King for any former Disloyalty, Rebel-
 lion, or Treason. And this Conversion,
 Repentance or Reformation, is the natural
 Condition of Pardon, and the only Satisfac-
 tion that can possibly be made, either to
 God or Man, for past Offences. But, in all
 these Methods of Pardon, Reformation and
 Perseverance in new Obedience is the
 Condition of receiving the Benefit of it,
 and is either expressly mentioned, in all such
 cases, or necessarily to be understood.

And

And therefore they, who understand the Matter otherwise, or, who teach any other Doctrine, ought to consider whether they are not supporting the Strong-Hold of Sin and *Satan*, in the Christian World, and whether any Act of Grace and Pardon can be at all consistent with Law and Government, of any sort or kind, which should be granted for *future* as well as *past*, Offences? Let them consider, whether this must not leave all Rebels and Traitors, under every Government, to do as they list and to act just as if they were under no Law at all. Or let them say, whether such lawless Liberty is the peculiar Privilege of the Gospel, and the sole Happiness of the Subjects of *Christ's* Kingdom? It will be here said, no doubt, that all Preachers of Righteousness continually insist upon the necessity of Holiness, Repentance, or Newness of Life, and represent to Men the infinite Hazard they run by neglecting it and putting off their Repentance to their latter Days or Hours. But this is only saying and unsaying again, or affirming and denying the same thing, while

a Notion of Repentance is entertain'd, that may be sincere and available with God, when Life is spent and a Man has no time left for Reformation of Life and new Obedience. For this is evidently maintaining that Repentance does not consist in Reformation or new Obedience, and that, consequently, a good Life is not necessary to Salvation, tho' it is the safest way.

'Tis hard to know what Men often mean by sincere Repentance on a Death-Bed, or near the Close of Life, where there can be little or no time left for Trial. Nothing, I think, can be hereby understood but the Purposes and Promises of Amendment. But if Reformation, or new Obedience, be the thing absolutely and peremptorily insisted on, no Purposes or Promises, concerning it, can be taken for the thing itself: but yet such Sinners, in the opinion of some Divines, will never be punish'd for all, or any of their evil Deeds done in the Body; but, on the contrary, rewarded for those good Deeds which they had never done, but which they might have done had they lived

lived long enough. But this is a Supposition so very monstrous and absurd, and so contrary to Reason, as well as to the most numerous Declarations of Scripture, that 'tis perfectly amazing how any learned Men, professing Christianity, should ever fall into it. But the Truth is, that the Christian Clergy, themselves, have done more towards the gradual Advancement of Deism, and driving Men into what they call Infidelity, than any thing else could ever have done, by giving such Constructions and Interpretations of Scripture, or of Doctrines supposed to contain a Revelation from God, as plainly contradict and overthrow the clearest and most demonstrable Principles of Reason.

Indeed, if eternal Torments, in our strict Philosophical Sense of the Word, was to be the future Punishment of Sinners; and if God would hereafter proceed against them with almighty, implacable, and inexorable Revenge, and raise all their Powers and Faculties, vastly beyond all the Capacities of suffering in human Nature, on purpose to plague and torment them the more effectually,

tually, without Mercy and without End;
 and to punish them in the capacity of Angels,
 when they had only sinn'd against and of-
 fended him in the low Capacity of poor
 impotent and frail Mortals: were this, I say,
 to be the Punishment of Sin without Pardon,
 it might be fit and reasonable, thus to give
 Men the Hope and Expectation of Pardon
 without Repentance. But this Supposition
 is destructive of all our natural Notions of
 God, and setting up *Diabolism* instead of
Deism. And therefore they, who thus un-
 derstand and represent the Matter, would do
 well to consider, whether they are not hereby
 most effectually subverting and exploding
 the Christian Revelation, by rendring it ab-
 solutely incredible and incapable of Proof.
 But, I cannot help saying that, the Argu-
 ments, hitherto brought to support this Doc-
 trine, or to reconcile such a Principle, ei-
 ther to the Reason of things, or to the Na-
 ture and Perfections of God, have been so
 exceedingly absurd, weak, and trifling, that
 I should think it needless to write a single
 Page, or to bestow one Minute's time, in con-
 futing them. But if any learned Man shall
 think

think he can defend this Doctrine better than has been yet done, I shall not decline the Consideration of new and stronger Reasons.

The many Absurdities, Inconsistencies, and extravagant Suppositions, which Men have fallen into concerning the Nature, End, and Use of Sacrifices, have perhaps been chiefly owing to a Misunderstanding of St. *Paul's* Design and Manner of Reasoning against the *Jews*. It might be evidently prov'd, from abundance of Instances, that this Apostle in his Reasoning against his own Nation and Countrymen, constantly argued *ad Hominem*, in order to bring Men to Faith in *Christ* and Obedience to the Gospel, without directly contradicting their generally received and establish'd Notions about Sacrifices. And this Method of arguing *ad Hominem* has been always allowed and approv'd of; and is often the shortest and most effectual, as well as the softest and least offensive way, of silencing and convincing an Adversary, by his own Concessions, without entring into the Consi-

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deration

deration of his Principles whether they be right or wrong.

And from hence St. *Paul*, in all his Arguments and Reasonings from *Moses* and the Prophets, was obliged to understand and apply them in a Mystical, Typical, and Figurative Sense, of which Sense the original Authors themselves had never given the least Hint or Intimation. But this Mystical Way of Reasoning and drawing Consequences from Scripture, was a Method which the *Jewish* Doctors had constantly taken, for three or four hundred Years before, by which means they had introduced, and brought into common Belief, an infinite number of monstrous Absurdities. And therefore they could object nothing against this Apostle, who was as learned a *Rabbi* as any of them, for taking them in their own way ; since he had certainly a much better Right to establish Truth, by this means, than they could have to establish Error. But this is a Subject of too large an Extent to be entered upon here. But thus much I shall venture to say, that all Mysteries and Unintelligibles in

in Religion, have generally arisen from Types, Allegories, and figurative Expressions, taken in a strict and literal Sense: and this has been too much owing to the ambitious designing part of the Clergy, who, not finding their Account in Moral Truth and Righteousness, have thought it necessary to deal mostly in Mysteries, which have always afforded them the best Market, and prov'd the most saleable Commodity.

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